Vol. VII. Numb. 89

THE OBSERVATOR.

On the Posture of Affairs in Spain *and* Italy. *The Emperor like to be in better Circumstances to help his Brother the King of* Spain. *On the* French's *equipping Squadrons at* Breſt *and* Thoulon. *The Miſchief of Money's ſtagnating, and Want of Bullion. The Reaſonableneſs of our bringing it from the* Spaniſh Weſt Indies, *to ſupport King* Charles, *and not let it be carry'd to ſupport the Duke of* Anjou. *On the Affairs of* Portugal, *and the* French *Match lately talk'd of.*

From Saturday, December 18. to Wednesday, December 22. 1708.

Obſ. YOU have brought me no News from *Spain* this great While, *Roger*. How go Matters on that Side?

Country-m. You have heard, no Doubt, Maſter, that the Enemies of our Peace rejoyce very much, that the *French* have taken *Denia*, and the Town of *Alicant*, and hope they will ſoon be Maſters of the Caſtle. The *French*, in their Gazette, and other News-Papers, make a mighty Noiſe of this, and boaſt, that now King *Charles* has no Strengths in his Hands, but *Barcelona*, *Girone*, and *Terragona*. This is the News from that Side, Maſter: Pray give me your Opinion of it.

Obſ. Some People would be very well pleas'd, *Roger*, that you and I ſhould keep our own *Tink*, as the *French*-man call'd it, to our ſelves; ſo that all I ſhall ſay, is, that I am ſorry for it. The Confederate Affairs on that Side were once in a good Condition, had they been kept ſo; but why they were not, 'tis the Buſineſs of our Superiors to enquire; whoever had a Hand in miſmanaging Things there, at the Rate they have been, have a great deal to anſwer for. But we have Reaſon to hope, that Matters will take a better Turn in thoſe Parts next Campaign, that ſince we are Maſters of the *Mediterranean*, and have *Port Mahone* now at command, and ſince the Pope ſeems to be ſo over-aw'd, that he dare not attempt to diſturb the Houſe of *Auſtria* with a new *Holy League*, or rather a *Croiſado*, the Emperor may be in a Condition to give King *Charles* more effectual Aſſiſtance, than he has hitherto done, if the private Views of ſome, who pretend to be his Friends, and are under very great Obligations to be ſo, don't ſtill embroil Matters in that Country under-hand.

Country-m. Why, I hope there's no Danger of that, Maſter?

Obſ. I don't know but there may, *Roger*. 'Tis a true Saying, That where there's a great deal of Smoak, there's always ſome Fire. There has not been ſo much Diſcourſe about a League in that Country, without ſome Ground for it. The Pope and his Court would never have appear'd ſo bare-fac'd againſt the Emperor and King *Charles*, as they have all along done, had they not thought themſelves ſure of Aſſiſtance. You muſt not think, that inſatiable Covetouſneſs and Ambition is confin'd to this Side the *Alps*, and that there's no Men of great Titles, capable of receiving Bribes in that Country, as well as any where elſe; and if there be any ſuch, the *French* Court knows where to find them. But we hope, *Roger*, that the March of the *German* Troops, and the Concurrence his Imperial Majeſty has had from *Great Britain* and *Holland* in that Matter, has broke the Neck of thoſe Deſigns, however well they were lay'd.

Country-m. The *French* talk of equipping Squadrons at *Breſt* and *Thoulon*, Maſter: Pray let me have your Thoughts of that?

Obſ. If it be ſo, *Roger*, I don't know but the *French* King has very good Reaſon to think, that he may have more Occaſion to make Uſe of his Fleet, than formerly; and I hope that may give others Reaſon to think of doing ſo too.

Country-m. What d'ye mean by that, Maſter? Let me underſtand you.

Obſ. If you underſtood your ſelf, *Roger*, you would ask me no ſuch Queſtions. Have you got any of the Bullion from the *Weſt Indies* yet, that you were in Hopes of ſo long ago?

Country-m. Not one Word of that, Maſter, if you love me; for 'twill put me in a Paſſion. I can't endure to hear, that *Jack French*-man ſhould get King *Charles*'s Money to fight with againſt himſelf; and that neither her *Britiſh* Majeſty, nor his Catholick Majeſty, can come at a Farthing on't. But no more of that Subject, Maſter: I hope 'twill be otherwiſe ere we be many Years older.

Obſ. Do you know how many Years 'tis, *Roger*, ſince *Lewis* the XIV. ſent his Grandſon, the Duke of *Anjou*, to uſurp the Crown of *Spain*?

Country-m. I don't carry Almanacks in my Head, Maſter, but I believe 'tis about eight.

Obſ. Do you know who has got all the Bullion from the *Weſt Indies* ſince that Time, *Roger*? and how much of it has been coin'd at - - - -?

Country-m. Not I, Maſter; get it who will, I have got none of it; I am ſure I want it to pay my Landlord his Rent this *Chriſtmas*, and all my Neighbours complain as well as I; they ſay, they can get little or no Money for their Product, and wonder whither all our Caſh is gone!

Obſ. There are Times, *Roger*, when God, to puniſh a ſinful People or Nation, makes Riches to take Wings, and flee away.

Country-m. I am ſatisfy'd of that, Maſter; but know at the ſame Time, that if thoſe concern'd in publick Managements, have any Hand in waſting the Treaſure of Nations, they are ne'er a Whit the more excuſable, becauſe God, in his righteous Judgment, ſuffers ſuch ill Men to prey upon the Vitals of the People: Therefore, Maſter, 'tis my Opinion, that whoever are the Authors or Countenancers of ſuch Methods as occaſion the publick Money of any Country to ſtagnate, or to run only in one Channel, as from *B.* to *L.* or from *E.* to *B.* are as guilty of wronging the Health of the State, wherever that happens, as any Phyſician is, who being intruſted with a Patient's Health, ſhould give him ſuch Medicines as would make his Blood ſtagnate, inſtead of making it circulate.

Obſ. You talk like an Apothecary, *Roger*. Remember that the Cobler ought not to go beyond his Laſt.

Country-m. Why, you take us Country-men to be all a Parcel of thick-skull'd Fellows, Maſter, that know nothing; and therefore you would have us to ſtop our Mouths, and be ſilent; but I'll tell you, the beſt Way to do that, is, to let us have good Store of Beef and Pudding. If we han't a Belly full of that, 'tis in vain for you, or any Body elſe, to think to keep us from enquiring, what becomes of the Money that we ſhould have to purchaſe it? For if our Riches, which the World does now generally take to conſiſt in Money, fly continually out, and little or none come in, I am ſure we had as good fly after it, as ſtay at home without it; Therefore, Maſter, I muſt tell you, in plain blunt *Engliſh*,

Engliſh, that I know no Reaſon why the Confederate Fleets ſhould not go and bring home Caſh for the King of *Spain* from the *Weſt Indies*, as well as the *French* do it for the Duke of *Anjou*; for it can never enter into my Noddle, that the *French* King will want Men, if he have Money enough to pay them; and let our Victories be ever ſo numerous or great, ſo long as he and his Grandſon keep *Spain* and the *Weſt Indies*. There's not one of all my Country Neighbours that will be perſwaded the *French* King is ſo low, as People give him out to be, tho' I think 'tis pretty evident, that we have made his Army run the Gauntlet this Summer in *Flanders*.

Obſ. All in good Time, *Roger*. We have Reaſon to hope well from our late Changes, and to believe, that thoſe who promoted Addreſſes formerly in the Houſe of Lords, that a ſufficient Number of Men of War ſhould be always kept in the *Weſt Indies*, to protect our own Trade, and annoy the publick Enemy, will take as much Care as poſſible, to have it put in Practice now, and our Trade enlarg'd in thoſe Parts of the World.

Country-m. I am ſure there's great need of it, Maſter; for it has been woundy much contracted of late. Could I and my Country Neighbours have *geeho'd* to the *Weſt Indies* with our Carts and Waggons, we would have try'd ere now, whether we could not have put in with the Monſieurs for a Snack of the Plate, and every Thing elſe, that is worth bringing from thence, and not have ſuffer'd it for ſo many Years to have been made Uſe of againſt us.

Obſ. You have got ſome *Chriſtmas* Ale in your Head, *Roger*, thou rav'ſt ſo; or elſe you have ſtole a Bottle of *Joan*'s beſt *October*, that ſhe lay'd by to treat her Friends with.

Country-m. You have got the Way of the World, Maſter, when a Man ſpeaks Truth, they always ſay he is a mad, or a hot-headed Fellow. But I can tell you, for as little as you think of *Joan*, ſhe whiſpers in my Ear, that tho' ſhe does not underſtand Politicks, ſhe believes ſhe can put a Queſtion that will puzzle you.

Obſ. That may very well be, *Roger*; for I remember my Grannum told me in Commendation of the Sex, that if a Woman do but look to her Apron-ſtrings, ſhe will never be at a Loſs for what to ſay. But pray let's hear the Queſtion?

Country-m. The Queſtion is, Maſter, Whether it had not been better for us to have brought home King *Charles*'s Money from the *Weſt Indies*, to have ſupported him in carrying on the War, and have been pay'd for Convoy and Carriage, than to pay Money for ſupporting him out of our own Pockets?

Obſ. Joan's ſo good at asking Queſtions, *Roger*, that I fancy ſhe's as good at making Anſwers; therefore let her anſwer this herſelf. All that I ſhall ſay to the Matter, is this; That ſince the Queen and Parliament have declar'd againſt Peace with *France*, 'till *Spain* and the *Weſt Indies* be reſtor'd to the Houſe of *Auſtria*, that Prince muſt be ſupported ſome how or other, better than he has hitherto been.

Country-m. And what d'ye think *Joan* ſays to that, Maſter?

Obſ. Out with it, *Roger*.

Country-m. She ſays it muſt be by ſuch Campaigns of *Valencia*, as the Earl of *Peterborough* made in 1706. and not by ſuch as Somebody elſe has made there in 1708.

Obſ. Joan's very witty, *Roger*. But all this while you ſay nothing of the Affairs of *Portugal*.

Country-m. That's all I can ſay of 'em, Maſter; and would you have me ſay more?

Obſ. Nay, hold, good *Roger*, I am ſorry to hear you ſay ſo much.

Country-m. I can't chuſe but laugh tho', Maſter, for all my Want of Money, to think what a ſorry *Chriſtmas* the new-marry'd *French* Couple is like to keep this Year: And if the *Germans* go on as they have begun, I fancy the Pope will have no great Heart to ſend them conſecrated Blankets for the Iſſue of their Marriage next Year.

Obſ. You know the Proverb, *Roger*, that old Folks are twice Children. The wiſe King *Solomon* was made a Fool by Women in his old Age; and as we have ſeen the Power of a certain Prince, whom his Flatterers call'd invincible, very much eclips'd, we don't know but the divine Juſtice may alſo leave an eternal Blot upon his ſo much applauded Wiſdom, ſince he has made Uſe of 'em both againſt Heaven.

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